

## SCOPE OF CLAIMS

1. A reflective polarizer comprising:

5 plural birefringent bodies each having one of a polygonal prism and a circular cylinder whose cross section perpendicular to a major axis direction thereof has a shape of polygon or substantially circular, the shape of the cross section having an aspect ratio of not less than 2, and the birefringent bodies having a refractive index difference of not less than 0.05 between a refractive index component in the long axis direction and a refractive index component in a minor axis direction of

10 the birefringent bodies,

wherein the plural birefringent bodies are dispersedly arranged substantially in one direction in a support medium, and

15 wherein, where the shape of the cross section perpendicular to the major axis direction of the birefringent bodies is substantially circular, in the cross section, any one of the plural birefringent bodies is in contact on a side face thereof with each of at least two other birefringent bodies in contact on a side face thereof with each other.

20 2. The reflective polarizer according to Claim 1, wherein the birefringent bodies are made of fibers, respectively, and a shape of a cross section of each fiber perpendicular to the major axis direction thereof is polygonal.

25 3. The reflective polarizer according to Claim 2, wherein each of fibers has a sectional shape of a triangle and lengths of at least two sides of the triangle are substantially equal to each other,

wherein the fibers are arranged such that the fibers are substantially parallel in a plane and such that apexes of sectional

triangles of fibers adjacent to each other are in contact with each other, and

5 wherein, in a cross section of the reflective polarizer perpendicular to the major axis, the support medium surrounded by fibers of sectional triangles with apexes in contact with each other is of a hexagon.

4. The reflective polarizer according to Claim 2, wherein each of the fibers has a sectional shape of substantially a regular triangle,

10 wherein the fibers are arranged such that the fibers are substantially parallel in a plane and that apexes of sectional regular triangles of fibers adjacent to each other are in contact with each other, and

15 wherein in a cross section of the reflective polarizer perpendicular to the major axis, the support medium surrounded by fibers of sectional triangles with apexes in contact with each other is substantially of a regular hexagon.

5. The reflective polarizer according to Claim 2, wherein each of the fibers has a sectional shape of a triangle and lengths of at least two sides of the triangle are substantially equal to each other,

20 wherein the fibers are arranged such that the fibers are substantially parallel in a plane and that apexes of sectional triangles of adjacent fibers are in contact with each other, and

25 wherein in a cross section of the reflective polarizer perpendicular to the major axis, the support medium surrounded by fibers of sectional triangles with apexes in contact with each other is a triangle lengths of two sides of which are substantially equal.

6. The reflective polarizer according to Claim 2, wherein each of the fibers has a sectional shape of a quadrangle and lengths of four sides of the quadrangle are substantially equal to each other,

5 wherein the fibers are arranged such that the fibers are substantially parallel in a plane and such that apexes of sectional quadrangles of adjacent fibers are in contact with each other, and

10 wherein, in a cross section of the reflective polarizer perpendicular to the major axis, the support medium surrounded by fibers of sectional quadrangles with apexes in contact with each other is a quadrangle and lengths of four sides of the quadrangle are substantially equal to each other.

15 7. The reflective polarizer according to Claim 1, wherein, in the cross section perpendicular to the major axis direction thereof, the shape of each birefringent body is a substantially circle, and a triangle defined by connecting centers of three circles in direct contact in the cross section has at least two sides substantially equal to each other in length.

20 8. The reflective polarizer according to Claim 7, wherein the triangle defined by connecting the centers of the three circles in direct contact in the cross section perpendicular to the major axis direction has three sides substantially equal to each other.

25 9. The reflective polarizer according to Claim 7, wherein the shapes of the birefringent bodies are respective circular cylinders, and the circular cylinders have substantially equal diameters in the cross section perpendicular to the major axis direction, and some of the circular cylinders located in a medial region to an outermost thereof in

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the cross section is in contact on a side face thereof with six other circular cylinders for the birefringent bodies.

10. The reflective polarizer according to any one of Claims 7 to 9, wherein the birefringent bodies are respective fibers.

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11. The reflective polarizer according to Claim 10, wherein, in the birefringent bodies, either one of a refractive index component in the major axis direction thereof and a refractive index component in a minor axis direction thereof is substantially equal to a refractive index of the support medium.

10. The reflective polarizer according to any one of Claims 1 to 9, wherein, in the birefringent bodies, either one of a refractive index component in the major axis direction and a refractive index component in a short axis direction is substantially equal to a refractive index of the support medium.

15. A laminated optical member comprising the reflective polarizer as set forth in any one of Claims 1 to 9, and 11,

wherein the reflective polarizer is laminated with an optical layer having another optical function.

20. A laminated optical member comprising the reflective polarizer as set forth in Claim 10,

wherein the reflective polarizer is laminated with an optical layer having another optical function.

25. A laminated optical member comprising the reflective polarizer as set forth in Claim 12,

wherein the reflective polarizer is laminated with an optical

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layer having another optical function.

16. The laminated optical member according to Claim 13, wherein the optical layer is an absorptive polarizer.

5 17. The laminated optical member according to Claim 14, wherein the optical layer is an absorptive polarizer.

18. The laminated optical member according to Claim 15, wherein the optical layer is an absorptive polarizer.

19. The laminated optical member according to Claim 13, wherein the optical layer is a retardation plate.

10 20. The laminated optical member according to Claim 14, wherein the optical layer is a retardation plate.

21. The laminated optical member according to Claim 15, wherein the optical layer is a retardation plate.

15 22. The laminated optical member according to Claim 13, wherein the optical layer is a retardation plate.

23. The laminated optical member according to Claim 14, wherein the optical layer is a retardation plate.

24. The laminated optical member according to Claim 15, wherein the optical layer is a retardation plate.

20 25. The laminated optical member according to Claim 13, wherein an absorptive polarizer is provided on one surface of the reflective polarizer and a retardation plate is provided on another surface of the reflective polarizer.

25 26. The laminated optical member according to Claim 14, wherein an absorptive polarizer is provided on one surface of the reflective polarizer and a retardation plate is provided on another

surface of the reflective polarizer.

27. The laminated optical member according to Claim 15, wherein an absorptive polarizer is provided on one surface of the reflective polarizer and a retardation plate is provided on another surface of the reflective polarizer.

28. A liquid crystal display apparatus comprising the laminated optical member as set forth in Claim 13,

wherein the laminated optical member is provided in a liquid crystal cell.

29. A liquid crystal display apparatus comprising the laminated optical member as set forth in any one of Claims 14 to 28,

wherein the laminated optical member is provided in a liquid crystal cell.

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